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ABSTRACT

Two-year colleges, business, government, and labor together can ensure the availability of responsive, high quality job training and retraining as an essential element in the nation's economic revitalization. Although several national initiatives have set the stage for local business-college-labor cooperation, both nationally and locally, there is little coordination or comprehensive planning among the many separate employment and training activities and, especially at the local level, almost never a total match of resources and need. Recent events, however, provide an important opportunity to realize more comprehensive planning and coordination between colleges and business. These include the passage of the Job Training Partnership Act, which expands the role of government and Private Industry Councils (PIC's), and the efforts of the American Association of Community and Junior College's BICCC (Business Industry Community College Coalition) concept and its Putting America Back to Work Project which provides practical support and information on current public-private activities. As college administrators plan and establish such ventures, they should employ techniques such as environmental scanning and organizational network analysis in order to tailor their efforts to the community. For example, if strong PIC's exist in the community, the colleges should play a supportive role; however, if the PIC's are unable to do so, the community college must assume a community-wide coordinative and planning role. (DAB)

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BICCC: AN IMPORTANT COMMUNITY COLLEGE INITIATIVE

PRESENTATION TO BIC SEMINAR

KANSAS ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Topeka, Kansas

January 24, 1983

by

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BICCC'S: A VALUABLE RESOURCE IN CONTEXT

Introduction

I am pleased to be with you today and to share in your very important deliberations, as you think through how--in the Kansas and midwest context--two-year colleges, business, government and labor can together ensure the availability of responsive, high-quality job training and retraining for the State's citizens. Practical partnerships for such a purpose could not be more timely! The need is certainly clear enough, as long-term restructuring of the economy and a severe recession combine to raise unemployment levels to record post-World War Two heights. It is now widely recognized in this country--albeit somewhat belatedly--that human resource development and the related reinvestment in the nation's human capital is an essential element of the nation's economic revitalization strategies. This concern is now at least equal if not more important than the traditionally larger investments in plant, equipment, and new technology.

After twenty years of careful building and testing, two-year colleges represent a pre-eminent resource for "retooling the American workforce," as a TRW executive has so aptly termed the challenge. And the opportunity for two-year community and technical colleges to contribute in a systematic way to the nation's economic redevelopment has never been greater. A significant number of important national initiatives that have set the stage for local business-college-labor cooperative ventures:

- The Job Training Partnership Act, which has provided for stronger business participation in planning and operating CETA training programs through strengthened Private Industry Councils.

- The President's Private Sector Initiatives Task Force, which has explored practical approaches to public-private sector cooperation.

- ACCT's BICCC concept, which is testing an approach to business-college partnerships.

- AACJC's Putting America Back to Work Project, which is aimed at promoting local business-college partnerships in economic and human resource development. Although the details aren't yet fully worked out, you will be interested to know that the Putting America Back to Work Task Force, which provides guidance to the project, is soon to become a joint ACCT-AACJC body.

- The ACCT-AACJC Joint Commission on Federal Relations, which seeks to have Federal legislation fully recognize and capitalize on the two-year college resource.

- The Department of Education's Ad Hoc Task Force on Public-Private Partnerships, which is advising the Department on a wide range of partnership issues. Of course, Bill Brown from the Department has been with us today.

My aim this evening is not to exhort you on the imperative of partnerships between business and colleges in economic and human resource development, or to review the broad national issues with you. Your being here today confirms both your knowledge and commitment. Instead, I would like to suggest, in a very nuts and bolts fashion, how to go about making local BICs most effective in the very specific context of the newly emerging local employment and training systems. I want to spend some time defining what the so-called "system" tends to be and then focus on how a BIC might tie into it.

The Emerging System

Let me first take a minute to reflect on the dimensions of the human resource development challenge which the nation's employment and training system must address. Pat Choate of TRW has very capably bounded the problem in a useful monograph done for the Northeast-Midwest Institute, "Retooling the American Work Force."

- Twenty percent of American adults are functionally illiterate.

- Women are not being integrated into the work force effectively, despite their dramatically growing numbers.

- Workers with technologically essential skills are retiring in large numbers, and replacements are not being trained.

- Productivity in manufacturing is reduced through a high turnover rate--almost a third of all workers annually.

- Over the remainder of this century, perhaps 10 to 15 million manufacturing workers and an equal number of service employees will be displaced from their jobs due to robotization and foreign competition.

I could continue the review of the grim issues we face, but I need to turn attention to the system now in place to meet these challenges. In the first place, it is my duty to inform you that there isn't, in any strict sense of the word, a "system" nationally or locally. No comprehensive human resource development policy has ever been formulated at the national level, much less implemented. Instead, some 22 separate pieces of legislation, including most notably the Vocational Education Act and new Job Training Partnership Act, deal with employment and training questions, with no systematic linkages or requirements for coordination.

And at the local level, we almost always find a bewildering array of "mini" systems engaged in employment and training activities, typically with little coordination or even communication, much less comprehensive planning. City and county-operated CETA programs fund a wide variety of training providers. Secondary schools operate vocational education programs, and two-year colleges provide technical-occupational programs. What coordinative mechanisms do exist, such as the Private Industry Councils created under CETA or work-education councils, seldom turn their attention beyond their own particular "mini" system. In practice, of course, this means that at the local level there is almost never a comprehensive matching of total resources available for human resource development with the full range of need. There is, therefore, no way of ensuring that the very substantial resources

available are being invested in the most rational and efficient fashion. In short, there is no strategic planning in human resource development.

A recent very significant change in the employment and training environment is the passage of the Job Training Partnership Act, which will over the coming year replace the current CETA program. This is not to suggest that the Act radically reforms CETA as we know it; indeed, the basic characteristics of the program will continue. However, the Act provides an important opportunity to realize more comprehensive planning and coordination of effort in employment and training, through two routes: first, state government is given a much stronger role in monitoring the program; second and more important, business is given an expanded role in local planning and evaluation, through majority membership on local Private Industry Councils, which now have real authority over local job training programs. Labor is also recognized as a participant in the new decision-making process.

The significance of the Act lies in the potential of local Private Industry Councils as comprehensive planning and coordinative bodies for all local human resource development programs, not just CETA. There are signs that many communities see the PICs as such vehicles and are moving to formalize this more powerful role.

Putting America Back To Work

I would like to touch briefly on the project I am directing for AACJC this year, Putting America Back to Work, because it provides practical support for what the BICCC effort is intended to accomplish. Last spring, an AACJC task

force issued a report entitled "Puttiing America Back to Work," which called for a "moon shot" commitment to human resource development in this country and for the formulation of a comprehensive national policy to express such commitment. Several months of planning between AACJC and the Kellogg Foundation resulted in a grant to AACJC for the project, whose three main objectives are:

- To promote the formulation of a comprehensive national human resource development policy.

- To build a network of national public and private sector organizations which recognize, and are committed to utilizing, the tremendous resource which two-year colleges represent for the nation's economic development.

- To provide very down-to-earth written advice to local community colleges on how to build effective partnerships with business, government, and labor. Such advisories will be based on extensive research into cooperative ventures and also on the most recent scan of the rapidly changing employment and training environment.

The project is just now getting fully underway, although we have already amassed a wealth of information on current public-private cooperative activities and have met with executives of a number of national organizations, including the National Alliance of Business, National Governors' Association, and International City Management Association, to name only a few, and have established formal contact with many others. Allow me to share some

preliminary conclusions based on Project work to-date:

- It is clear that for most of its history, the two-year college community has been relatively inward-looking and insulated from the wider employment and training system. Confronted with extraordinary growth in the mainstream credit programs, these institutions have had no choice but to concentrate on meeting this seemingly automatic demand for services. Times have, of course, changed dramatically, and two-year colleges are now forced to take a more externally-focused, strategic approach to leadership planning and program development. This is proving to be a tough transition for many institutions.

- On the other hand, a large number of successful business-college partnerships have been launched around the country in recent years. There is, therefore, a growing foundation for further extension of two-year colleges into the wider network or system.

- Despite numerous examples of successful partnerships at the local level, it is obvious from our work up to now that, at the national level, two-year colleges have not significantly penetrated the consciousness of those organizations and institutions engaged in human resource policy making. Time after time, I read policy statements that neglect to recognize community colleges as a major economic development tool, while citing secondary vocational education systems as the primary vehicle for skills training and retraining. Even the recent edition of the Phi Delta Kappan ignores

the community and technical college issues as a planning concern.

In summary, considerable good work is going on at the local level, on a project-by-project basis. But there is a need for a more strategic approach to planning and program development on the part of two-year colleges and for a concerted effort nationally to ensure that community colleges are fully recognized as the nation's single most powerful tool for human resource development. Also, the specific roles of two-year colleges within state systems are more important now than ever before.

BICs in Context

I would like to change course somewhat now in order to focus on the practical implications of what I have been saying this evening for business people and community colleges engaged in getting local BICs underway. Let me begin with an observation--that perhaps the cardinal sin of management is naiveté-which is to say that those of you who are creating or operating BICs are well-advised to invest heavily in intelligence efforts aimed at understanding the national, state and local environments insofar as they are pertinent to the job being undertaken. Otherwise, there is the very real and present danger of reinventing the wheel, of losing credibility, and ultimately of becoming irrelevant and a force not to be taken seriously. To do such intelligence gathering, or environmental scanning as they say in strategic planning circles, is a tall order in light of the rapidity of environmental change. Not only does it demand spending considerable time looking outward, but it also requires the development of a well-honed capability to extract from literally hundreds of pieces of information those factors and trends

truly relevant to the local situation. And even more painful is the task of assessing their meaning for the particular organization.

At Cuyahoga Community College, located in Cuyahoga County, Ohio, we invest heavily in strategic planning in the area of employment and training, and a very interesting aspect of our environmental scanning is what we call organizational network analysis. Briefly, what we do is identify all those local and organizational institutions which at first glance appear to have any significance to what we are attempting to accomplish, and then we identify the existing and desired relationships between our organization and each of the others. For example, an organization might be an actual or potential resource provider, a competitor, a joint-venture partner, or a legitimator (in the sense that its public support and blessing may be critical to achieving our ends). A particular organization may be any one, two, three or even all four at one time. The point is to factor such relationships into our strategy formulation process explicitly, and especially to work out in detail those strategies involved in achieving a desired relationship with an organization, or changing an unfavorable relationship.

Now, when I talk about organizational network analysis, I am not merely spouting strategic planning or management jargon; I am talking about an important and newly emergent survival technique for our kind of institutions. Its very valid premise is that, these days, you "can't go it alone," at least not if you want significant results. You must form organizational relationships of many kinds, and the more rigorous your planning process in this regard, the more likely you are to form productive relationships.

Well, what about BICs? I submit to you that, as college administrators and trustees go about establishing and doing the planning for local BICs, the primary determinant of your success will be the care with which you tailor the BIC to the particular environment of your locality--the economic development plans and mechanisms, the training and retraining needs, and also the network of organizations involved in human resource development. As I have already suggested in these remarks, one of the critical factors in the local environment which must be reflected in BIC planning is the developing role of Private Industry Councils under the Job Training Partnership Act. In many communities Private Industry Councils are apparently being viewed in an expansive sense--as an opportunity to achieve comprehensive planning and coordination of human resource development programs--and the appointment of top community leadership to these bodies certainly augurs well for this broader role.

In a community which already has a strong PIC, or is in the process of building one, the local community college is probably best advised to take a two-pronged course of action: first, to develop a BIC with a specific mission to serve as a vehicle for college-business partnership in the design and implementation of specific training and retraining programs, not to compete for the broader community-wide planning role; and, second, to participate actively in Private Industry Council deliberations. In such a case, a college will want to make its BIC activities complementary with the wider human resource development agenda being developed through the Private Industry Council.

By contrast, in those communities where it is clear that the Private

Industry Council will not or cannot play the wider planning and coordinative role, and will instead focus exclusively on the allocation of a relatively small pot of Job Training Partnership Act dollars locally, then there is every good reason for a local college to establish a BIC with a broader coordinative mission and to pursue strategies to achieve this community-wide planning role. In this instance, it is the Private Industry Council which will ultimately fit within the PIC framework.

In Closing

In December, I observed in testimony to the National Advisory Council on Vocational Education, meeting in St. Louis, that a "powerful momentum is building for public-private cooperation at the local level," and that only two choices are open to the educational community: "to take the initiative and play a leadership role in the creation of new local partnerships; or, to have our necks unceremoniously jerked from the sand for us, at a serious cost in public trust and institutional credibility." In that same presentation, I also suggested that local communities are "where the action is" in terms of building effective partnerships among business, government, education, and labor in the interest of effective economic and human resource development.

Carefully planned and trustee-supported BICs will be an important vehicle for the realization of effective local partnerships, but only if the BIC mission and plans are specifically tailored to the local environment. Avoid naiveté! At best it will result in ineffective use of resources. Worse, it could damage seriously your institution's credibility. If a strategic approach is taken to BIC planning--which means basically that plans rest on a

very sophisticated understanding of the local environment--then you have every reason to anticipate a positive, productive experience.

Let me close with best wishes for every success as you engage in a task of fundamental importance to the economic health of our nation.

Thank you.

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